

Guidelines for Signs



Chapter 3:

Guidelines for Signs

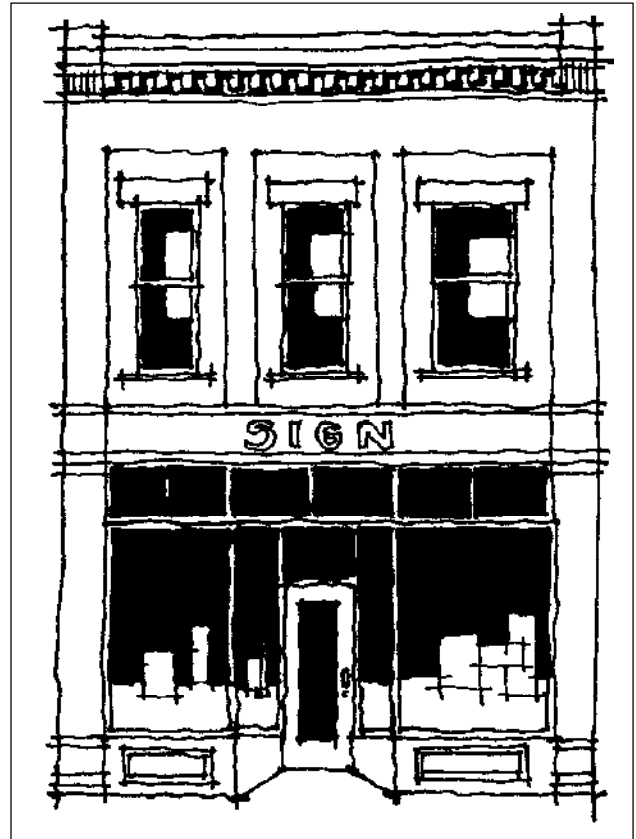
Historically, signs used in Old Town were relatively simple. They varied in size and location, but most were basic painted panels with simple lettering styles. Others were painted directly on the building wall. If it was illuminated, an indirect light source was typical. These features of sign design should be continued. To do so, the City seeks to limit the size and number of signs so that no single sign dominates the setting, but, rather, the district reads as a distinct neighborhood. *(When planning for a sign project see also Chapter 24.04 of the Code of the City of Wichita and Section III-C.4(d) of the Unified Zoning Code.)*

Sign Context

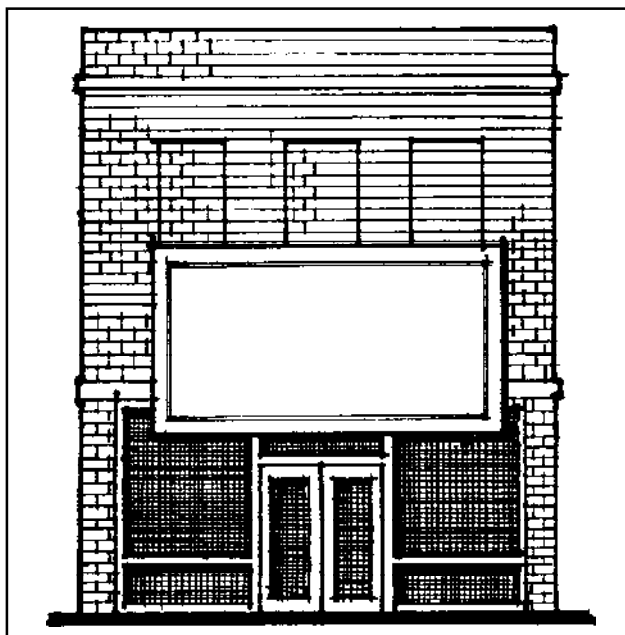
A sign typically serves two functions: first, to attract attention, and second to convey information. If it is well designed, the building front alone can serve the attention-getting function, allowing the sign to be focused on conveying information in a well conceived manner. All new signs should be developed with the overall context of the building and of the district in mind.

61. Consider the building front as part of an overall sign program.

- Coordinate the overall facade composition, including ornamental details and signs.
- Signs should be in proportion to the building, such that they do not dominate the appearance.
- Develop a master sign plan for the entire building front, which should be used to guide individual sign design decisions.



The overall facade composition, including ornamental details and signs, should be coordinated. Signs also should be in proportion to the building, such that they do not dominate its appearance.



Inappropriate: A sign should be subordinate to the overall building composition.



A flush-mounted wall sign is one that is mounted flat to the wall.



This flush-mounted sign is located directly above the entryway on this contemporary storefront in Boulder, CO.

62. A sign must be subordinate to the overall building composition.

- A sign shall appear to be in scale with the facade.
- Locate a sign on a building such that it will emphasize design elements of the facade itself. In no case should a sign obscure architectural details or features.
- Mount signs to fit within existing architectural features. Use signs to help reinforce the horizontal lines of moldings and transoms seen along the street.

Permitted Sign Types

63. Flush-mounted wall signs may be considered.

- A flush-mounted wall sign is one that is mounted flat to the wall.
- When feasible, place a wall sign such that it aligns with others on the block.
- When planning a wall sign, determine if decorative moldings exist that could define a "sign panel." If so, locate flush-mounted signs such that they fit within panels formed by moldings or transom panels on the facade. In no case should a sign obscure significant facade features.

64. A pole mounted or monument sign may be considered

- No pole mounted or monument sign should have an effective area greater than thirty-two square feet.
- No pole mounted sign should exceed fifteen feet in height.

65. Projecting signs may be considered.

- A projecting sign should be located near the business entrance at, or slightly above, eye level, just above the door or to the side of it.
- Note that other approvals may be required to allow a sign to overhang the public right-of-way.

66. A window sign may be considered.

- A window sign may be painted on a window.
- A window sign may cover approximately twenty-five percent (25%) of the total window area.

67. A directory sign may be considered.

- Where several businesses share a building, coordinate the signs. Align several smaller signs, or group them into a single panel as a directory to make them easier to locate.
- Use similar forms or backgrounds for the signs to tie them together visually and make them easier to read.



A projecting sign should be located near the business entrance at, or slightly above, eye level, just above the door or to the side of it.



Where several businesses share a building, coordinate the signs in a directory or use a master sign plan.



A window sign may be considered. A window sign may be painted on or hung just inside a window.



Any sign that visually overpowers the building or obscures significant architectural features is inappropriate.



Symbol signs add interest to the street, are quickly read and are remembered better than written words.

Inappropriate Sign Types

68. **Signs that are out of character with those seen historically, and that would alter the historic character of the street, are inappropriate.**
 - Any sign that visually overpowers the building or obscures significant architectural features is inappropriate.
69. **No sign or part of a sign may move, rotate, flash or change its brightness.**

Sign Materials

70. **Sign materials shall be compatible with that of the building facade.**
 - Painted wood and metal are appropriate materials for signs. Their use is encouraged. Unfinished materials, including unpainted wood, are discouraged because they are out of character with the historic context.
 - Highly reflective materials that will be difficult to read are inappropriate.
 - Painted signs on blank walls were common historically and may be considered.
 - The use of plastic on the exterior of a sign is prohibited.

Sign Content

71. **Symbol signs are encouraged.**
 - Symbols signs add interest to the street, are quickly read and are remembered better than written words.
72. **Use colors for the sign that are compatible with those of the building front.**
73. **Simple sign designs are preferred.**
 - Typefaces that are in keeping with those seen in the area historically are encouraged. Avoid sign types that appear too contemporary.
 - Also limit the number of colors used on a sign. In general, no more than three colors should be used.

74. **Select letter styles and sizes that will be compatible with the building front.**
- Letters should not exceed ten inches in height.
 - Avoid hard-to-read or overly intricate typeface styles.
75. **Preserve historic painted signs where they exist.**

Sign Lighting

One should be able to perceive the historic character of individual buildings and of the district as a whole during both day and night. Sign lighting should be compatible with the historic character of the street.

76. **The light for a sign shall originate from an indirect source.**
- Light shall be directed at the sign from an external, shielded lamp. Internal illumination of a sign is inappropriate.
 - No sign should be illuminated by fluorescent or backlighting.
 - A warm light, similar to daylight, is appropriate.
77. **The use of neon and/or incandescent bulbs may be considered.**
- Use neon in limited amounts so it does not become visually obtrusive.



Preserve historic painted signs where they exist.



Appropriate: Light shall be directed at the sign from an external, shielded lamp.